DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 248 927 JC 840 521

AUTHOR Forstall, James C.
TITLE Survey of Assessment of Basic Skills in Illinois Public Two Year Colleges. Report #99.
INSTITUTION Lincoln Land Community Coll., Springfield, Ill.
PUB DATE Jan 84
NOTE 8p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Basic Skills; *Community Colleges; *Educational Diagnosis; *Quantitative Tests; Questionnaires; *Reading Tests; Remedial Programs; State Surveys; Student Placement; *Testing Programs; Two Year Colleges; *Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Illinois

ABSTRACT

In fall 1983, a survey was conducted to determine the extent of basic skills assessment of incoming students conducted in Illinois public community colleges. Questionnaires were sent to 50 community colleges, requesting information on the skills assessed, the time of assessment, and the instruments used. Study findings, based on responses from 44 institutions, included the following: (1) 42 colleges assessed reading skills, 36 assessed writing skills, and 41 assessed math skills; (2) at least half of the colleges conducted the skill assessments prior to registration; (3) test scores were used to recommend placement in specific classes by 20 colleges for reading classes, 15 for writing classes, and 21 for math classes; (4) placement in specific classes on the basis of test scores was mandatory at 18 colleges for reading, 16 for writing, and 16 for math; and (5) five colleges assessed English skills, two assessed language use skills, and three assessed English as a Second Language skills. A list of test instruments used, the survey instrument, and a list of responding colleges are included in the study report. (HB)

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ED248927

SURVEY OF ASSESSMENT OF BASIC SKILLS IN ILLINOIS PUBLIC TWO YEAR COLLEGES

by
James C. Forstall
Vice President, Student Services

Report #99
January, 1984
Lincoln Land Community College
Springfield, Illinois

JC 840 521

The survey described in this report was conducted for the Lincoln Land Community College ad hoc Assessment Committee and the Vice President for Student Services, who will use the results as a background for their examination of LLCC's Assessment of Basic Skills Program (Reading, Writing, Math).

The survey included 50 Illinois community colleges, 44 (88%) of which responded. The survey instrument and list of the responding colleges are contained in the appendix. A summary of selected responses appears at the end of this report.

Among the major findings are the following:

1. Forty-two of the 44 colleges do assess reading skills of incoming students. Of those, 27 assess before registration, one during registration, four after registration, and five at any time. Twenty (20) of the 42 respondents indicated that placement in specific classes based on the student's score is recommended and 18 indicated that placement is forced.

2. Thirty-six of the 44 colleges do assess writing skills of incoming students. Of those, 18 assess before registration, one assesses during registration, six after registration, and four at any time. Fifteen of the 36 respondents indicated that placement in specific classes based on the student's score is recommended and 16 indicated that placement is forced.

3. Forty-one of the 44 colleges do assess math skills of incoming students. Of those, 28 assess before registration, one assesses during registration, two after registration, and four at any time. Twenty-one of the 41 respondents indicated that placement in specific classes based on the student's score is recommended and 16 indicated that placement is forced.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE SURVEY OF ASSESSMENT OF BASIC SKILLS IN ILLINOIS PUBLIC TWO YEAR COLLEGES

Reading instruments used and number of institutions using:

ACT	1	Cooperative English Test	1
ACT-CPP	3	CPP, ACT Composite, SAT or other national standardized test	1
ASSET	3	Diagnostic Reading Test	1
California Achievement Test	2	ETS	1
California Achievement Test & Gates McGintle	1	ETS-Nelson Denny-COOP Test	1
California Reading Test	2	Gates McGintle	1
Carver Reading Progress Scale/DRP	1	In House	3
College Board-CGP-Reading	1	Nelson Denny	14
College Board-Nelson Denny	1	SRA-Reading	2
College Qualification Test	1	Stanford Test of Academic Skills	1

Writing instruments used and number of institutions using:

ACT-CPP	1	In House	12
ASSET	4	In House & Test of Standard Written English	1
College Board	2	Nelson Denny	2
College Board DTSL Usage Test	1	Nelson Denny/In House grammar & writing sample	1
College English Placement Test	1	Stanford Test of Academic Skills	1
College Qualification Test	1	Usage plus piece of writing	1
Comparative Guidance & Placement Program	1	Writing Sample	2
ETS Test of Written Expression	2	Writing Sample/Written English Expression Test	1
Houghton-Mifflin English Usage Test	1		

Math (Arithmetic) instruments used and number of institutions using:

ACT-CPP	2	CPP, ACT Composite, SAT or other national standardized test and in house	1
ACT and In House	1	Descriptive Tests of Math Skills	2
ASSET	4	In House	23
College Board Math Placement	1	In House and ETS	1
College Qualification Test	1	Math Activity Packet Series	1
Cooperative Math Test for Algebra I and MAPS for Arithmetic Skills	1	Mathematics Assn. of America	1

Other Skills Assessed

Five colleges responded that they assess English skills and they do this before registration. Two of them use an in house instrument, one uses the CPP-ACT, and one uses CPP, ACT composite, SAT or other national standardized test, and another uses College Board Written English Expression. Of the five, one college recommends placement and four force placement. One college assessed English skills only in courses lower than English I.

Two colleges responded that they assess language usage skills and they do this before registration. One uses the Iowa Test of Educational Development and the other uses the ACT-CPP. Only one responded that they forced placement.

One college indicated that they assess technical math skills but did not indicate at what point they do the assessment. The instrument used is the Technical Math Placement Test and placement is forced.

Another college assesses mechanical skills before registration. They did not indicate what instrument was used nor did they indicate the placement system used.

Three colleges indicated that they assess English as a second language before registration and the instruments used are an in house instrument, an English Reading Test for Students of English as a Foreign Language, and Ilyn G-1. The placement is forced for two of the colleges and one did not indicate their placement system.

APPENDIX A

Responding Colleges

1. Belleville Area College
2. Black Hawk College
3. Black Hawk College - East Campus
4. Richard J. Daley College
5. Danville Area Community College
6. College of DuPage
7. Elgin Community College
8. Frontier Community College
9. William Rainey Harper College
10. Highland Community College
11. Illinois Central College
12. Illinois Valley Community College
13. Joliet Junior College
14. Kankakee Community College
15. Kaskaskia College
16. Kishwaukee College
17. College of Lake County
18. Lake Land College
19. Lewis & Clark Community College
20. Lincoln Trail College
21. John A. Logan College
22. Malcolm X College
23. McHenry County College
24. Moraine Valley Community College
25. Morton College
26. Oakton Community College
27. Olive-Harvey College
28. Olney Central College
29. Parkland College
30. Prairie State College
31. Rend Lake College
32. Richland Community College
33. Rock Valley College
34. Carl Sandburg College
35. Sauk Valley College
36. Spoon River College
37. State Community College
38. Thornton Community College
39. Triton College
40. Harry S. Truman College
41. Wabash Valley College
42. Waubonsee Community College
43. Wilbur Wright College
44. John Wood Community College

APPENDIX B

Lincoln Land Community College

Shepherd Road
Springfield, Illinois 62708
217/786-2200

Accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

November 15, 1983

The Ad Hoc Assessment Committee at my campus has asked that I collect some information from other state community colleges regarding assessment of the basic skills of incoming students.

Therefore the enclosed card with pertinent questions is forwarded and it is requested that you take a brief moment to complete it and mail it back to me. I will be most happy to share the results with you.

Sincerely,

James C. Forstall
Vice President, Student Services

JCF:JN

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APPENDIX C

What basic skills do you assess? When do you assess?

	before registration	after registration
reading _____	_____	_____
writing _____	_____	_____
math_____	_____	_____
other (specify)_____	_____	_____

What instrument do you use? If locally constructed, write "in-house." reading _____
writing _____
math_____
other (specify)_____

Indicate your placement system:
no placement _____ placement recommended _____ placement forced_____ other (specify) _____

_____
Institution

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8118 Math-Sciences Building
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